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ISPATCH
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THE MAGAZINE OF THE TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

new leadership for
TXANG
56th IBCT
conducts
unit's BWC



Texans and Chileans
compete in this year's
BEST WARRIOR



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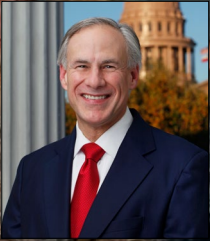
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The Cover



Tech Sgt. Marie Sarabia, 149th Fighter Wing was the only female competitor in the 2016 Best Warrior Competition. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Elizabeth Gilbert)

Texas guardsmen and Chilean service members get a running start during the Best Warrior Competition's eight-mile ruck march at Camp Swift near Bastrop, Texas, Feb. 6, 2016. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Vanessa Reed)



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Putting People First

Commentary by Colonel Thomas M. Suelzer
TXANG Director of Operations

"The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help them or concluded that you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership." - Colin Powell

In "Policy Directive #1 - The Adjutant General's Philosophy," Maj. Gen. Nichols directs us to "know our people." Anyone who has met the Adjutant General knows that he doesn't mean this in some esoteric sense. He means really know them. Know their story. Know what makes them tick. Know how their life is going. There is no downside to this philosophy; when we invest the time to know and acknowledge our people, they are more motivated, work more productively and are willing to dig in when the going gets tough.

We all like to feel valued. Have you ever had a supervisor that failed to take an interest in you as a person or as a professional? It is demotivating to say the least. Our people must never feel anonymous. We should show them through our conduct that we are committed to understanding and supporting their needs and have their interests at heart. Maj. Gen. Nichols challenges us to "give high priority to actions that will help us serve people better; prove, by your actions, that our people are your top priority." We must make it a priority to help our people gain the skills they need to succeed and consider their interests as we make difficult choices that involve their future. Making people our top priority strengthens the Texas Military Department team and creates a climate for greater loyalty, trust and innovation.

Getting to know our people sounds straightforward, but our hectic work schedules, pop-up tasks and military position changes conspire against us. It takes commitment. Having an open door policy simply is not enough, because many subordinates are reluctant to approach a

supervisor or key leader in their unit. Reaching out and connecting with followers is a leadership responsibility. "Battlefield circulation," whether in the field or in the office, is an excellent way to make this personal connection. Interacting with our Soldiers, Airmen and civilians shows them that you recognize and appreciate what they do and it allows them to see you as a person. Talking to them as individuals and listening to their interests and concerns will help keep the thought that we are an organization made of people in the forefront of your mind.

We must also get to know our families and ensure that we treat them as an extension of the unit. Take full advantage of any opportunity to share in family events and accomplishments. Make every effort to help them cope with both military and non-military related problems. Show that you respect and value their support by providing accurate and timely information to minimize the stress that comes with having a military family member. These efforts will help improve morale and make our Soldiers, Airmen and families more resilient.

As military members we have the innate desire to spend our time working on endeavors that extend beyond our own personal needs. We all want to be connected in some way to a mission that has value and meaning, and to a team that values our service. This commitment to service demands that leaders at all levels of our organization strive to better understand and show concern for the impact our decisions have on our people. Engage, ask questions, listen and observe... "know our people." - **FROM THE TOP**



Camp Mabry: Military Saves

23-24 February 2016 0900-1200

Camp Mabry - Auditorium (Bldg. 8 Alamo Room)

Military Saves Week 2016 is February 22-27th - one week out of the year to focus on paying yourself first by saving. Camp Mabry is participating in the Week by offering a two-day event with educational workshops and resources to help you meet the challenge of saving and other personal financial goals. Take advantage of these opportunities and build your financial knowledge and ability. **Only you can accomplish each step of the challenge: it all begins with the your participation and making the commitment to save.**

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- ✓ Big Austin: Entrepreneurship, Financial Readiness
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- ✓ CFPB: Budgeting, Basic Saving and Investing
- ✓ Frost Bank: Understanding, Managing and repairing your credit.

"You must know every single one of your men. It is not enough that you are the best soldier in that unit, that you are the strongest, the toughest, the most durable, the best equipped, technically - you must be their leader, their father, their mentor, even if you're half their age. You must understand their problems. You must keep them out of trouble; if they get in trouble, you must be the one who goes to their rescue. That cultivation of human understanding between you and your men is the one part that you must yet master, and you must master it quickly."

- General Eisenhower in a speech to the graduating cadets at the Royal British Military Academy, 1944



From Slick Sleeve to One Star



Story and photos by 2nd Lt. Alicia Lacy, Texas Military Department Public Affairs Office

AUSTIN, TEXAS – In 1983, Dawn M. Ferrell enlisted in the Texas Air National Guard as a slick-sleeve airman basic.

Nearly 33 years later, now-Brig. Gen. Dawn M. Ferrell continues to serve the Texas Air National Guard and made history becoming its first female general officer.

To celebrate this milestone, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, Texas Military Department senior leaders and Ferrell's family and friends attended her promotion ceremony Jan. 15, in the Texas Capitol's Senate Chambers, with Abbott administering her oath of office.

"I'm humbled and I'm proud to have been chosen for this position, and I recognize that this is an important step for the Texas Air National Guard," Ferrell said. "I honestly didn't realized that there hadn't been a female before, but I think it's just another way of showing everybody that anybody can do anything in the Air Force."

Abbott appointed Ferrell the Texas Military Department's Deputy Adjutant General-Air in November 2015.

"Dawn Ferrell has earned the promotion she is being recognized for today," Abbott said. "Texas is about advancement and in Texas, we believe you can achieve anything if you work hard and strive with ambition to achieve great things. Dawn Ferrell is the newest and greatest example of what we believe in Texas."

Thinking back to the beginning of her career, Ferrell remembers only wanting to serve her initial commitment in the guard and later planned to pursue a college degree. However, once in the TXANG, Ferrell said she loved being in the military and a member of the guard, whose unique part-time structure allowed her to do both.

"I was just going to do my initial six-year enlistment,"

Ferrell said. "I wanted to go to college and see what happens. I never thought that 32 and a half years later I'd still be here."

Ferrell was able to pursue her education, earning a bachelor of arts, master of arts, and doctorate of philosophy degrees, as well as a successful civilian career in higher education while progressing through the ranks of the TXANG.

"I absolutely loved being in the military and being a part of the guard and the great thing about being in the guard is you get to experience both," she said.

Ferrell has grown in her career at the 136th Airlift Wing from an aerial port specialist to an aerial port officer and group commander.

"No matter what the barrier is – perceived or not – you go around or you go over, but you don't stop," she said.

Ferrell attributes her success to her will to succeed and never quit, regardless of the obstacle. That same attitude has taken her to serve in positions such as director of plans and logistics operations at International Security Assistance Force headquarters Afghanistan and to coordinating response efforts during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in New Orleans and Houston.

And now as deputy adjutant general, she plans to ensure the TXANG is always ready to serve, whether it's a federal or state mission, as well as seek new missions for the state.

"Be ready for whatever opportunities come your way," she said. "There may be different paths to get there, so do things you need to do to be prepared so that when opportunities come along, you won't miss it."

- DISPATCH



Edward Ferrell, Brig. Gen. Dawn M. Ferrell's father, right, and Brig. Gen. David McMinn, commander of the Texas Air National Guard, pin on her new rank during her promotion ceremony Jan. 15, 2016, in the Texas Capitol's Senate Chambers.



Texas Gov. Greg Abbott administers the oath of office to Brig. Gen. Dawn M. Ferrell during her promotion ceremony Jan. 15, 2016, in the Texas Capitol's Senate Chambers. Abbott appointed Ferrell as the Deputy Adjutant General - Air for the Texas Military Department's Texas Air National Guard. Ferrell is the first female to hold the rank of general officer in the TXANG.



TXANG welcomes new commander salutes outgoing commander



Brig. Gen. David M. McMinn, left, the incoming commander of the Texas Air National Guard, sits next to Maj. Gen. Kenneth W. Wisian, the outgoing commander of the Texas Air National Guard, during a ceremony recognizing Wisian's relinquishment of command to McMinn at Camp Mabry, in Austin, Texas, Jan. 23, 2016.

Story and photos by 2nd Lt. Phil Fountain
Texas Military Department
Public Affairs Office

AUSTIN, TEXAS – Members of the Texas Air National Guard gathered to welcome their new commander and salute their outgoing commander at Camp Mabry, in Austin, Texas, Jan. 23, 2016.

Maj. Gen. Kenneth W. Wisian ceremoniously relinquished command of the Texas Air National Guard to Brig. Gen. David M. McMinn, the organization's chief of staff, immediately prior to his retirement.

"It's a great time for Texas," said Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols, the Adjutant General of Texas, who officiated the ceremonies. "We don't need a change, but it's a great thing to have a change and bring a new perspective in."

McMinn brings three decades of experience to the role, according to his biography. He is a command pilot with more than 5,000 flight hours in numerous aircraft, including the C-130 Hercules assigned to the Texas Air National Guard's 136th Airlift Wing, in Fort Worth.

"I charge you (McMinn) with taking care of the organization, taking care of those who serve Texas and the nation, as I do with everyone who's in a command position," Nichols said. "Ken did it honorably."

"We never failed Texas and we didn't fail the nation in any of the missions we did," Nichols said. "I charge you to continue that."

McMinn was humbled to receive the appointment.

"Thank you, General Nichols," McMinn said. "Thank you for the trust you put in me to take over this position, especially from him. Big shoes (to fill)."

In addition to the 136th Airlift Wing, the Texas Air National Guard's largest operational units include the 147th Reconnaissance Wing, in Houston, and the 149th Fighter Wing, in San Antonio.

Moreover, the organization is made up of more than 3,200 airmen who operate and manage facilities and equipment valued in excess of \$500 million to support state and federal missions.

The Texas ANG leadership transition began





when Wisian announced his plan to retire from the military and join the staff of the Texas General Land Office, a Texas state agency, as a senior deputy director overseeing coastal protection and disaster recovery operations.

"I've known Dave a long, long time," Wisian said. "I'm excited to pass the flag on to him. We've both come to the guard within about a year of each other, back in the '90s."

"Dave's the right person to take the helm now," Wisian said. "I know you all will have fantastic future working with him, and I'm looking forward to it."

Nichols and Wisian both discussed some the challenges McMinn will face as commander.

"We have a lot of challenges, with sequestration, as it is, and we have challenges with modernization," Nichols said. "And we have challenges with force structure, having more missions than we have people to do it."

But they expressed confidence in the future of the organization.

"It looks like there's a significant corner turned," Wisian said. "There's good prospects now for some updated hardware, the Air Guard is being recognized by the Air Force – not nearly as well as it should be – but better than it has for a long time. Things are on an upward vector now."

Wisian's retirement caps off a 34-year career he began as a cadet in the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps program at the University of Texas at Austin.

Wisian served in the active duty Air Force for ten years before transitioning to the Texas Air National Guard, where he held leadership positions at all levels, including combat service in

"It's a big trust and I don't take that lightly."



"Dave's the right person to take the helm now."



the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq.

In addition to serving as a traditional Air National Guardsman, McMinn maintains a civilian career as a commercial airline pilot. He has deployed in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, where he commanded at the group level.

"It's a big trust and I don't take that lightly," McMinn said of his assignment. "I look forward to providing as much of me as I possibly can for Texas."

"From the time I joined the Texas Air National Guard, in 1992," McMinn said, "from that moment, I always felt I owed the Texas Air Guard more than it could ever owe me. I still feel that today. I'm as charged up and excited about doing great things for the people of Texas, and for the people within the National Guard of Texas than I ever have been."

As the new commander, McMinn said his plan is to ensure the focus of the headquarters staff remains oriented toward serving the needs of the air wings.

"I'm excited about being your commander, excited about being value-added, and am excited that our staff here serves the wings," McMinn said. "We're going to take care of you guys (at the wings), that's our job."

McMinn also looked to the future.

"We're going to do good things, and we're going to grow and prosper and learn from each other," McMinn said.

"We're all going to leave this position, whether through retirement or promotion, or just move on to your next assignment," he said. "Hopefully, we'll all be better airmen and better people for having served in the state headquarters. That's my goal."

- DISPATCH



BEST WARRIORS

Texas and Chilean Service Members Compete in this year's competition



Thirty-seven elite competitors from the Texas Army and Air Guard, Army Reserves and Chilean Military participate in the Best Warrior Competition at Camp Swift near Bastrop, Texas, Feb. 4, 2016. This is the first time the U.S. Army Reserves and Chilean military participated in the Texas BWC. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Elizabeth Gilbert)

BEST WARRIOR



Staff Sgt. Timothy Boutte, the senior mechanic for Company D, 949th Brigade Support Battalion, 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, pushes through prone rows while Command Sgt. Maj. Michelle Thompson, the battalion's command sergeant major, motivates him at Camp Swift near Bastrop, Texas, Jan. 8, 2016.

COOPERATIVE COMPETITION

56th IBCT SOLDIERS COMPETE IN UNIT'S BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

Story and photo by Sgt. Michael Vanpool
56th IBCT Public Affairs

BEST WARRIOR

BASTROP, TEXAS - "You can do it!" "Just one more left!" "Woo who, you're almost there!"

Those aren't exactly words exchanged between people competing for the same title. But it is what a group of Soldiers were saying to each other this past weekend.

Seven soldiers of the 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard, competed in the brigade's Best Warrior Competition at Camp Swift, Jan. 8-10, 2016.

Ultimately, one noncommissioned officer and one junior enlisted soldier bested out their comrades to achieve the title of Best Warrior. The winners were Staff Sgt. Jake Jackson, the supply sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 144th Infantry Regiment, and Spc. Russell Bega, an infantryman with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 142 Infantry Regiment. They each now have the chance to enter the Texas Best War-

rior Competition.

"You've got to train, not just your body but get mentally prepared," Bega said. "Whether it's the board or a 60-foot obstacle tower, you have to be confident in yourself to get past it and that you have the mental fortitude to succeed."

The road to the title was no cake walk. Combining the ruck march, two runs through a land navigation course and the air assault course, the competitors pounded their boots on the ground for more than 20 miles throughout a span of 36 hours.

The weekend was also sprinkled with an appearance board, a written essay and the assembly and disassembly of five military-grade weapons.

"All of this represents tasks that we should all know," Jackson said. "Whatever your skill set, you should be professional and try your best."

The down time between events was minimal, but it was not a time for rest. After soldiers worked through their individual events, they motivated each other to push themselves to their boiling point.

"We want everyone to do their best and to beat each other at their best," said Command Sgt. Maj. Clinton Petty, the brigade's acting command sergeant major. "There's no glory in beating someone on their worst day. There's more satisfaction in beating them on their best day."

The competitors were selected from their battalions about two months prior to the brigade's competition. In between the battalion and brigade competitions, the traditional feasts during the holidays could have prevented a solid physical state.

"I prepared with a lot of PT, a lot of studying," Jackson said. "Which was hard with all the food around during the Christmas break."

Being citizen-soldiers, most of the preparation took place during the time between drills and was often the sole responsibility of each competitor to find their own motivation.

"No matter what as long as I did everything in my power and the confidence in myself I could get it done," Bega said. "There were times on the land navigation course where I got tangled up and frustrated. But you take a second, time to breathe, you find out you're capable of more than you think."

This internal motivation, boosted by the cheering of fellow Soldiers, pushed the competitors to their physical and mental limits.

"I really think that being a part of something bigger, not just the 56th Brigade, but we're all a part of the Texas Guard, we're all a part of the Army." - **56th IBCT PAO**



Steven Hein, a police officer with the Richardson Police Department in Richardson, Texas, participates in the Texas Best Warrior Competition at Camp Swift near Bastrop, Texas, Feb. 4-7, 2016.

BASTROP, TEXAS – “And the Winner is...,” paused the announcer.

Most remember saying, “when I grow up,” as a kid, but few will remember what career they loved at the time and fewer reach their childhood dream; U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Steven Hein, Texas Air National Guard, is one of the few.

“I was like eight or nine-years old and my dad was walking around with a video camera, videotaping all us kids and interviewing us. I was in the backyard shooting a BB gun of all things. I was shooting tin cans when he asked me, ‘what do you want to be when you grow up?’ I said, ‘well I want to be on SWAT. I want to be a cop and be on SWAT,” said Hein.

Hein followed through with his dream and became a police officer with the Richardson Police Department in Richardson, Texas. He also became a training noncommissioned officer assigned to the 136th Security Forces Squadron at Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base.

He is a person who sets goals and enjoys a challenge. His latest challenge is a second attempt at taking home first place in the Texas Military Department’s Best Warrior Competition.

“It’s pretty impressive to make it twice in a row because he competed against all the guys in his wing and beat them out a second time to get here,” said U.S. Army Master Sgt. Shane Ruppel, Texas Army National Guard, the BWC event noncommissioned officer in charge.

The BWC is an annual event that tests the aptitude of elite Texas Air and Army National Guardsmen during three days of physically and mentally grueling events. The events are meant to test the member’s endurance, marksmanship, land navigation skills and professionalism. This year, guard members were also joined by Army reservist and Chilean military members.

“I figured I’d give it another try,” said Hein. “It was a good experience; it’s fun. You get to meet some new people, experience new things and learn some new stuff.”

His road to police work began in 2007, when he joined the U.S. Air Force as a security forces member. His first and only active duty assignment was with the 90th Security Forces Squadron, F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming, where he was a gate guard and patrolman for two years before becoming a member of the elite Tactical Response Force.

“We were dual mission,” said Hein. “We had nuclear recapture and recovery and we were also the base EST team, or SWAT team.”

The training he received during his time with the tactical response force directly contributed to his success in both his civilian and military law enforcement careers said Hein. It also prepared him for many of the tasks he had to face during his first run at BWC. He hopes that the training comes back just as naturally during his second trip here.

The little boy grew up and became a cop, times two. He worked long hours to help protect the city of Richardson and trained hard to represent his squadron at the

BWC for a second time and through all that he remains humble.

“I’m not the best, I’m not the strongest, I’m not the fastest and I’m definitely not the smartest, but I do give 100 percent to everything I do,” said Hein. “I get that from my dad, he always had the no quit mentality.”

The 2016 BWC is over. The competitors stood before a board, wrote an essay, completed a land navigation course in below-freezing temperatures, rucked eight miles, assembled, disassembled and fired a variety of weapons, ran an obstacle course and faced the mystery event.

The announcer continued, “The top NCO for the Texas Air National Guard, from the 136th Security Forces Squadron is Staff Sergeant Steven Hein.”

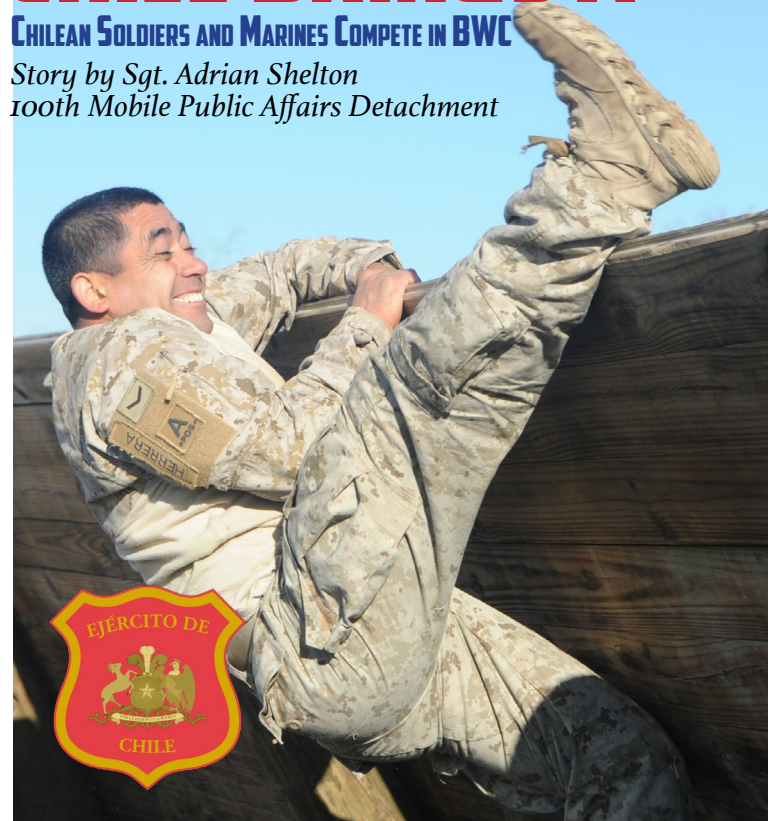
“I didn’t think I did that well, but I gave it all I’ve got,” concluded Hein. - **136th AW PAO**



CHILE BRINGS IT

CHILEAN SOLDIERS AND MARINES COMPETE IN BWC

Story by Sgt. Adrian Shelton
100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



Chilean service members compete in the Best Warrior Competition at Camp Swift, Texas, Feb. 4-7, 2016.



BASTROP, TEXAS – Troops from the Chilean Marine Corps and Chilean Army reinforced their continuing partnership with the Texas Army and Air National Guard during the state's Best Warrior Competition held at Camp Swift in Bastrop, Texas, February 4-7, 2016.

Although Texas has highlighted a joint Best Warrior Competition for several years, combining warriors from both the Texas Army and Texas Air National Guards, this was the first year the competition went international.

Chilean service members were selected to represent their country in the competition based on top performances in areas such as marksmanship and physical fitness.

"As soon as I got the notification that I was selected for the competition, I started looking at the tasks required in the competition on YouTube," said 2nd Corporal Jesus Vasquez, Special Operations Brigade, Chilean Marine Corps. "I thought it was an awesome competition."

"This event was like a wedding and we planned it," said Texas Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Alfonso Garcia, the State Partnership Program noncommissioned officer in charge of the Texas-Chile program. "We set up the logistics and the agendas and had everything all laid out, so when the Chileans came here everything flowed seamlessly."

The Chilean troops only had two days to learn the things that were different for them, such as certain weapons and communications equipment said Garcia.

"Our National Guard sponsors had a big part in helping us to prepare," Vasquez said. "The security measures in place for events like weapons qualification were very efficient and very safe. We learned alongside the National Guard troops and built a good relationship."

Garcia and other Guardsmen helped translate for the Chileans throughout the long weekend.

The Chileans found the week's events provided not only an opportunity to compete, but also presented them with unique challenges.

"It wasn't always easy for us to communicate because of cultural and phonetic differences," said Chilean Army Sgt. Maj. Juan Gonzalez, who sponsored the Chilean soldiers in the competition. "But the Guard had good translators and a lot of the Guardsmen spoke Spanish and made it easier for us to learn the scenarios during the competition."

The Chilean troops experienced some physical challenges as well and noted the geographic differences between Chile and Texas.

"In Chile, with its very high and low temperatures and differing elevations, we train differently on our land navigation courses," Chilean Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Guillermo Zepeda, the sponsor for the Chilean Marine competitors. "The points on the land navigation course are not consistent and change with the terrain, and our terrain and woodlands are more dense and not as flat."

"The height of some of the obstacles on the obstacle course was challenging because we are typically short people," Vasquez said. "The obstacle course looks more well-rounded for taller soldiers."

Despite this extra challenge, Staff Sgt. Cristobal Inostroza, Chilean Marine Corps, finished first in the obstacle course with one of the fastest times ever seen in the history of this competition. He also placed first in the road march.

During the road march, Vasquez and Gonzalez ran the entire march with their troops because they wanted their troops to know he and Gonzalez were there to support them said Vasquez.

Vasquez and Gonzalez are planning to take their experience from the Texas Military Department's Best Warrior Competition home with them and do something similar in Chile.

"We looked at all of this as a model for our own best warrior competition we're planning to have next year," Gonzalez said.

Texas Guardsmen might even have the chance to compete against their Chilean partners again.

"I would like for more Texas National Guard service members to participate in our best warrior competition next time," Vasquez said. "It would only be the right thing to do in return for them inviting us here."

At the end of the competition, who placed first didn't appear to be nearly as important as new relationships forged and the camaraderie between the partner forces strengthened.

"What we realized as we work together to do competitions like this, is we all do the same thing and train the same, we're just in different color uniforms," said Command Sgt. Maj. Mark A. Weedon, senior enlisted advisor of the Texas Military Department. "Chile is our South American partner, through our State Partnership Program, and we train together throughout the year. So this is the culmination of that relationship going to the next level."

■ 100th MPAD



[For more photos click here](#)



Tech Sgt. Marie Sarabia, 149th Fighter Wing, assembles an M240B machine gun during a timed event at the Best Warrior Competition at Camp Swift near Bastrop, Texas, Feb. 5, 2016. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Vanessa Reed)

BEST WARRIOR



Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Mindy Bloem
149th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS - National Guard leaders attended a four-day cyber security familiarization course in San Antonio Dec. 7-10, 2015. The class was the first of its kind for the Air National Guard that previously had no cyber security training for its senior leaders or commanders not assigned to cyber career fields.

The training course relies on seasoned professionals with extensive information security experience from the Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security at the University of Texas at San Antonio. The course outlines various cyber threats and educates leaders on the resources available to neutralize those threats.

For Brig. Gen. David McMinn, commander of the Texas Air National Guard, this course came at just the right time.

"Everybody agrees that the next big Pearl Harbor for us will be in the cyber realm," McMinn said. "We need to be adept in this realm. This course is helping senior leaders assess capabilities of not only our adversaries but also those of our own cyber forces."

The National Guard Bureau also announced the placement of multiple cyber protection teams across the nation during the same week senior leaders were attending the course - aligning the teams with FEMA management regions - yet another indicator that the Department of Defense aims to increase cyber preparedness. Texas was one of the four states assigned with Air National Guard cyber teams.

During the training, senior leaders spent some time at the 273rd Information Operations Squadron, an Air National Guard unit with a reputation for being cyber savvy. Walking into an environment of experts in a field where many are still beginners, could feel intimidating, but Maj. Kristy Leasman, commander of the 273rd IOS, aims to dispel those feelings.

"I want to take the mystery out of cyber for them," Leasman said. "The course builds a significant foundation, and the big lesson at the end of the week is that cyber is not special. It's just operations. Senior leaders should approach cyber operations the same way they approach any other operational task. This course just helps with the language translation."

According to McMinn, deciphering that language is crucial.

"We started this course in Texas because we identified a huge need for our National Guard leaders -- both Army and Air -- to learn what's going on in the cyber realm, and to be able get this training in San Antonio, a center for cyber excellence, to run portions of the course right here at the 24th and 25th Air Force, makes us the ideal location to be trained up on these amazing capabilities," McMinn said.

Because the dangers of the cyber domain are different than those of the physical domain, McMinn believes the action must fit the danger.

"Any other threat you see coming - the warning signs. You can see, 'hey, they just launched a missile,' but cyber attacks have no warning signs except for readiness, aptitude and the skills of those in the intel and cyber fields that see those things coming and protect us," he said.

During one of his lunch breaks, McMinn engaged in a conversation with some of his peers about how this class has helped them better understand the old adage of an ounce of prevention being weightier than a pound of cure.

"I had an idea about how big the problem was but after attending this course and learning what the full-scale threat is, I'm very much alarmed," McMinn said. But this training has taught me how to protect my family and myself, how to protect an organization and what our forces are doing to prevent those cyber threats.

But concern wasn't the only thing on the Texas leader's mind. Visiting with the cyber operatives bolstered his confidence.

"Not only am I more alarmed, but I also feel more secure in knowing what our amazing people are doing to protect us," McMinn said. "We can't always see what's going on behind the curtain, but there is a lot going on behind that curtain." - 149th FW PAO



Brig. Gen. David McMinn, Texas Air Guard commander, and Col. Lovell during a break from a newly implemented cyber course, Dec. 10, 2015.





Volunteer Alexis Corona greets a guest at the front desk in the Texas Military Forces Museum at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas, on Feb. 6, 2016.

AUSTIN, TEXAS - When the Texas Military Forces Museum's newest intern showed up for work on her first day at Austin's Camp Mabry, she had no idea what she would be in for. Alexis Corona, 21, is a student at nearby St. Edward's University majoring in History. This was her first day manning the museum's front desk, the nerve center of information and direction for casual visitors and Texas military history enthusiasts alike.

"I'm excited but a little nervous because I've never worked at the front desk before, but I'm looking forward

to talking to people as they come in, making sure that they know about all of the exhibits in the museum," said Corona.

As guests filed in and signed their name on the museum registry, Corona explained how she's aspiring to be a professor or work in a museum after college.

"This internship is good for my major and possible career opportunities," Corona said. "I just volunteer. I thought it would be a good opportunity to learn between classes."

Corona says that history runs in her family, noting that her mother and grandfather were both history majors.

"History will help us in preparing for the future," says Corona.

Volunteering at the museum doesn't always apply to just administrative work or greeting incoming guests.

"I really like using the saw blades and power tools because I've never done that sort of thing before," Corona said. "I really like helping to get the exhibits ready by painting and

Learning at the Museum

Museum volunteer learns lessons in guard history

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Luke Allen
100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



Displays and exhibits line the open foyer at the Texas Military Forces Museum at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas.

making everything look good."

"She's been doing really well here and putting in a lot of work even though she's still in her first few weeks here," said Andrew Druart, a two-year volunteer at the museum.

Corona, a native of Athens, Texas, has been working at the museum for a little more than two weeks and says that the internship gives her a chance to brush up on Texas history. After hearing about the position from a friend at school, Corona contacted the Texas Military Forces Museum. The museum offers students,

veterans, and local patrons a chance to volunteer their time and learn a little history along the way.

"I've catalogued training manuals and field manuals from World War II," Corona said. "I get to put them into our system, and that was interesting because they were so old. We have to wear gloves if they're in poor condition or if they are paperback."

She says that she enjoys interacting with our veterans on a daily basis.

"We get a lot of veterans that visit, many Korean and Vietnam era veter-

ans," said Corona.

Corona's next major project at the museum is preparing for next week's Sweetheart Dance, a World-War-II-themed fundraiser held annually at the museum on Valentine's Day weekend. The museum also holds battle re-enactments and demonstrations throughout the year.

"We get to do so much, from gift shop work to helping make the exhibits, to archiving things," said Corona. "It's just a total museum experience. I'm happy to be here."

- 100th MPAD



REAL Guidance

by
Jessie Trofe, MA, LPC

Self-Compassion:

Your best friend or closest family member comes to you about a recent loss or situation in which they perceived failure. What do you say to them and in what tone do you say it? Do you help pick them back up and show them compassion? Now picture that it is you who has experienced the loss or perceived failure. What do you say to yourself? Is your inner voice your worst critic, or as caring as you are to your loved ones?

It's February, a month that celebrates love, so I thought it only appropriate to discuss the Valentine's Day card we often forget to send- the one to ourselves. Why is it that we find it easy to give love and support so willingly to others, but then fail to extend that unconditional love to ourselves? We forget our humanity, or hold ourselves up to impossibly high standards- ones we would never impart upon other people. This Valentine's Day, let's talk about cutting ourselves a little slack and extending ourselves a

little love and empathy.

Self-compassion can be defined as "extending compassion to one's self in instances of perceived inadequacy, failure, or general suffering." It's a conversation we have with ourselves, and the quality of that conversation has the ability to impact how we feel and most likely, how we behave. Essentially it's our own inner voice that clears its throat in the face of pain, loss, or perceived failure. What does your voice sound like?

If it's anything like that of the vast majority, it is most likely lacking in the self-compassion department, enhancing negative thoughts and feelings, rather than relieving them. Dr. Kristen Neff, associate professor at the University of Texas in Austin, has made it her life's work to study self-compassion using research to support strategies to improve the quality of the conversation we have with ourselves, particularly at times when we most need support.

Mindfulness:

Dr. Neff asserts that self-compassion consists of three elements- mindfulness, common humanity, and self-kindness. Focusing on each of these elements helps to improve our self-compassion. Mindfulness requires being present, in the "here and now." It is recognizing thoughts that come up, as well as feelings, and noticing that they are there, without judgment. It is saying "this is suffering" or "this hurts." Mindfulness is exercising awareness, not pushing thoughts or feelings aside, or conversely, getting too emotionally charged. It is paying attention to thoughts and feelings, without attaching guilt or shame.

Common Humanity:

We are human, and by design, imperfect. We are not alone in feeling pain, suffering, or inadequacy. We are not alone in feeling alone. Let it provide comfort to you to know that others understand pain as well, and that you are in fact, not alone. When feeling loss or sadness, don't be afraid to reach out to your biggest cheerleaders, and be a support to yourself by reminding yourself that "the very definition of being human means that one is mortal, vulnerable, and imperfect."- Dr. Kristen Neff.

Self-kindness:

Self-kindness is accepting imperfection or a mistake with empathy for oneself, providing comfort just as you would for a friend who is struggling; self-talk that is kind and gentle, rather than self-critical and harsh. Ask yourself "what do I need to hear right now to express kindness to myself?" Some thoughts might include "May I be patient.

May I be strong. May I learn to accept myself as I am." Can we be as good to ourselves as we are to those we love?

• **REAL Guidance**

You can find more information on self compassion, additional exercises to improve self-compassion, as well as a quiz to test your own self-compassion on Dr. Kristen Neff's website at www.self-compassion.org.

*"Remember that if you really want to motivate yourself, love is more powerful than fear."
- Dr. Kristen Neff.*

Article written by Jessie Trofe, licensed professional counselor and new Psychological Health Coordinator and contractor for the Texas Army National Guard. Jessie works out of Camp Mabry in Austin, TX and can be reached at jtrofe2016@gmail.com or 512-782-5001 ext. 4252 for consultation.

Self-Compassion Enhancing Exercise:

Now let's put theory into practice. Dr. Kristen Neff recommends the exercise below for changing our critical voice to a more supportive and compassionate voice.

This exercise should be done over several weeks and will eventually form the blueprint for changing how you relate to yourself long-term. Some people find it useful to work on their inner critic by writing in a journal. Others are more comfortable doing it via internal dialogue. You can speak aloud to yourself, or think silently.

1. The first step towards changing the way to treat yourself is to notice when you are being self-critical. It may be that – like many of us — your self-critical voice is so common for you that you don't even notice when it is present. Whenever you're feeling bad about something, think about what you've just said to yourself. What words do you actually use when you're self-critical? What is the tone of your voice – harsh, cold, or angry? For instance, if you've just eaten half a box of Oreo's, does your inner voice say something like "you're so disgusting," "you make me sick," and so on? Really try to get a clear sense of how you talk to yourself.
2. Make an active effort to soften the self-critical voice, and do so with compassion rather than self-judgment. Say something like "I know you're worried about me, but you are causing me unnecessary pain. You are adding to the pain instead of showing support and kindness."
3. Reframe the observations made by your inner critic in a friendly, positive way. If you're having trouble thinking of what words to use, you might want to imagine what a very compassionate friend would say to you in this situation. For instance, you can say something like "I know you ate that bag of cookies because you're feeling really sad right now and you thought it would cheer you up. But you feel even worse and are not feeling good in your body. I want you to be happy, so why don't you take a long walk so you feel better?" The important thing is that you start acting kindly to yourself and feelings of true warmth and caring will eventually follow.



SSG TALYA BLACKSHEAR
PERSONNEL NCO
JTF 136 MEB DOMESTIC OPERATIONS
TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Staff Sgt. Talya Blackshear is a personnel non commissioned officer with the Domestic Operation's Joint Task Force 136 (Maneuver Enhancement Brigade), headquartered in Round Rock. Blackshear supports the mission with personnel and asset accountability, ensuring the commander always has a current and detailed picture of his overall strength, capabilities and locations.

"Having accountability of our personnel and being able to ascertain accurate strength numbers in a fluid, moving situation is my business. It feels really great to be a part of such an important mission. Taking care of soldiers is my top priority and I'm proud to be able to do it here at the Minuteman Brigade. Whether our personnel are called out for a natural disaster, deployment, or simply handling day-to-day operations - accountability is key."

Blackshear is also a senior at Grantham University, working toward a Bachelor of Science in Accounting.

OUR FORCE

- OUR FORCE



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The American Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces program provides emergency communication, access to emergency financial assistance and information and referrals for Service Members and their families. The American Red Cross provides courses such as Coping With Deployments and Reconnection Workshops in all 50 states. For information about other services American Red Cross offers contact your local chapter.

Michael Chaison :: michael.chaison@redcross.org

For Emergency Communications :: 1-877-272-7337

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